

## Maastricht University vision on education

Maastricht University (UM) is known for its **Problem-Based Learning** (PBL) and international orientation. Our **small-scale 'international classroom'** brings together people from all over the world who have different backgrounds and perspectives. UM links the content of its programmes with academic research and with making connections to **society**. These are the four core elements of the UM vision on education.

### PBL and CCCS

Since its founding in 1976, **Problem Based Learning** (PBL) has been the backbone of education at UM. Placing the learning process of the student firmly at the center through the PBL approach is the core of UM's educational vision.

Our educational principles create a way of learning that differs from traditional university education. Under the supervision of a tutor, students work together in a small team to tackle real-life challenges: an active way of learning that gives students better retention of knowledge, enhances their motivation and encourages them to develop skills that are essential for the labour market in the 21st century.

In essence, PBL revolves around four learning principles: **constructive education, learning in a relevant context, collective learning, and self-directed learning** ([CCCS](#)).

To support and strengthen the CCCS learning principles, we interweave **research** and **technology** into our education. The integration of research and education is a leitmotiv throughout the study programme, starting at an early stage. By engaging students in existing research, be it disciplinary or interdisciplinary, we facilitate integrated learning and synthesize knowledge and skills as well as prepare the groundwork for future learning. Next to research, applying technological innovation is the other thread on the spinning wheel of our education, helping us prepare for the future of personalised and flexible learning and at the same time contributing positively to the CCCS education principles. But, as enriching as technology may be, our education is campus-based for an optimal academic and social connection.

### Small scale education

Inextricably linked to PBL, **small scale education** is another pillar of our education: a challenging learning environment with small and interactive team sessions as distinctive characteristic. This not only enables students to socialize and get to know fellow students and work together, but also encourages students to participate in discussions in tutorial meetings. Small scale in all its facets contributes to better learning outcomes.

### International

At UM, we are focused on the development of our **International Classroom** (ICR), a place where differences become strengths.

ICR is an educational concept that goes hand in hand with PBL. By combining our small-scale PBL with the ICR, and adding **Global Citizenship Education**, students and teachers of different origins and with different nationalities and cultural backgrounds come together in small teams to discuss social challenges. These discussions are enriched by the widely diverse backgrounds and perspectives. In this diverse and inclusive environment, students not only develop knowledge and skills, but also intercultural competences and international understanding.

### Societal relevance

Within our education programmes, both Dutch and English taught, we equip students with important 21st century skills, such as analytical thinking, complex problem solving and teamwork, so they can contribute in our role as a **socially responsible university**.

UM links the content of its programmes with academic research, labor market demands and to societal challenges (e.g. the SDG's), both on a regional, national, European and global level. UM creates value for society, together with public and private partners, to improve the well-being of citizens in our region and beyond. The [Brightlands campuses](#) are exemplary for this ambition: by offering education on the Brightlands campuses and connecting our students with the Brightlands-community, we create a natural interaction between Maastricht University and Brightlands.